

NORTHERN PINES GOLF COURSE



Good morning,

My name is Tim Landgreen, a retired army officer who also drives school bus and with my family of 4 we own Northern Pines Golf Course. The property that we built the golf course on has been in our family for over 100 years with 95% sweat equity 5% cash in 1998 we built Northern Pines Golf Course and opened in 2001. What I didn't know about building the golf course I read about or asked a subject matter expert.

When we opened in 2001 our clubhouse was a little room in our pole barn. We opened with a prayer and a quote from Field of Dreams, "If you build it they will come.", and they did. As we started our leagues were small but they were loyal and everything we made, we put back in the course. But from day one the question was always the same, when are we going to get a liquor license? I have been working with everybody from the town chairman to the Madison office, trying to figure out a way to acquire a liquor license. In 2005 my family and I built our new clubhouse. With a magnificent view overlooking the valley. Our 40 x 80 rustic half log siding clubhouse and restaurant with a full kitchen, is a huge asset to the community. We have hosted 7 weddings, numerous receptions, anniversary party's, birthdays, and dances. Every one of these events was a huge success. We hold many fundraisers and benefits for the area. We do not push the bar aspect and we close at 10 pm because we are up at 4:30 am every day to cut grass and all the things that are required in running a golf course. We do have a beer and wine license but what we really need is a liquor license to fully satisfy our customers. With the passing of this bill you will help a small business in the north woods flourish.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Landgreen

Northern Pines Golf Course

Iron River, Wisconsin

Township of Hughes

715-372-5260

Good morning Chair Holperin and Committee members. I am Trevor Flanery; Sen. Jauch regrets that he could not speak in person this morning as he had district commitments to attend, but he has asked me to read this statement in his stead.

To: Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources
Senator Jim Holperin (Chair), Senator Jim Sullivan, Senator Jeffrey Plale, Senator David Hansen, Senator Joseph Leibham, Senator Neal Kedzie, Senator Glenn Grothman

I would like to thank Chairperson Holperin for scheduling this important piece of legislation.

AB 8 is legislation that would allow the Town of Iron River to issue a liquor license to the Northern Pines Golf Club, a 9 hole course located just outside of Iron River in Bayfield County. The facility has been operating for 9 years and the owner Tim Landgreen has 8 seasonal employees to whom he pays out \$4,000 in payroll every two weeks during the summer season, and he contributes more than \$10,000 in sales and property tax benefits to the area per year. As you are aware northern Wisconsin's economy is heavily reliant upon the tourism industry and 25% of Mr. Landgreen's customers are visitors to the area. It is important to note that his business has also dropped 30% due to the economic downturn.

This facility is unique. It offers distinct services to a limited population in Iron River and the owners are well respected by individuals and businesses throughout the Bayfield County area.

Northern Pines has been operating this small seasonal family business for 9 years. In addition to golfing opportunities his facility is an extremely important asset to the region as it also hosts a restaurant suitable for weddings, family, graduation and prom parties. The facility is very valuable because there are no other sizeable meeting facilities within at least 45 miles. Northern Pines is a unique small business that attracts visitors to the Iron River area and does not compete with other business in any way. As you will see from attachments to my testimony other business owners and residents appreciate the facility and encourage support for this legislation.

The golf course and restaurant facility operates from late spring until the end of October and the event space is open after October only by appointment. It is closed by 10 pm most evenings and is only open later than that for special events. Northern Pines currently holds a beer and wine license but has been seeking the liquor license to offer golfers and special event customers a full array of beverages to compliment his services. He does not function as a bar and has no intention of expanding his business if this legislation is adopted. Representative Sherman and I are offering this legislation as a way to improve services to his customers and strengthen the viability of this important small business to Bayfield County.

Because Iron River has reached its quota of liquor licenses, this legislation is the only option to help this business and enhance the economic benefits of this facility to the Bayfield County region. It is notable that Mr. Landgreen has been able to receive such strong support from other restaurant and tavern facilities in the region who are not threatened by his business but who recognize the value of his facility to the local economy. I am impressed with the vocal support from other liquor businesses that see his facility not as competition but as an enhancement to their community.

The legislation received 7-1 support from the Assembly Committee on Urban and Local Affairs, and was passed as amended by a voice vote in the Assembly. Representative Sherman worked with the Tavern League to tightly write the Legislation for one business so as not to open the door for statewide expansion of additional liquor licenses. It is worth noting the number of Tavern League members in Bayfield Co. who support this legislation and also note that Mr. Landgreen is a member of the Tavern League. It is also significant that Representative Sherman and I decided to pursue this solution in a transparent fashion rather than clothing the language by adding it to the State Budget. As members know there is plenty of precedence for the Legislature to use the budget to expand liquor licenses, however we are following this procedure because we are supportive of the merits, recognize the value to the community, county and state, and are confident that Senators will also realize that this provision is a win-win for the local and state economy.

Mr. Landgreen is a retired army officer who drives a school bus during the colder months to make ends meet. He was willing to come down to testify, but I requested that rather than making the 11 hour round-trip he stay and focus on his business during this critical part of his short business season. The golf course averages only three months of predictably operational weather during the warmest months of the year when he serves about 800 golfers a week. He is up at 4:30 in the morning to cut grass and tend to other aspects of running the golf course. He is quite willing to make himself available to answer any committee member questions. Representative Sherman and I are also willing to spend time with any member who has questions regarding the bill.

Passage of the bill does no harm. It assists a small business to grow. It is good for Bayfield County and good for Wisconsin. I request that you vote in support of this legislation.

--Senator Jauch

I would now be glad to answer any questions the committee might have.